THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir. (b) does not arise.

Upgradation of MIG-29

2157. SHRI PRAFULL GORADIA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Russian Government has approached India with their proposal for upgrading of MIG-29 fighter jets under the framework of long term military technical agreement;

(b) if so, what has been the reaction of Government thereto; and

(c) what has been our earlier experience with such upgradation of other Russian fighter planes in the Indian Air Force?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) No formal proposal has been received from Russia for upgradation of MIG-29 aircraft.

(c) Earlier a contract for upgradation of Mig-21 Bis aircraft was signed with Russia as a prime vendor. An overall delay of about 18 months in project implementation is anticipated due to various reasons, attributable to both the parties.

Promotion of Ex-servicemen in DGOFs

2158. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the DGOFs have investigated the causes of withholding of further promotions, for years together, of employees belonging to Ex-servicemen category;

(b) whether there is a growing discontent amongst Ex-servicemen working in Ordinance Factory for stepmotherly attitude of the authorities;

(c) whether Government would immediately intervene in the matter; and

(d) if so, the facts and details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI HARIN PATHAK): (a) The promotions of Ex-servicemen have not been withheld.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Does not arise in view of (a) & (b) above.

Middle-men in defence deals

2159. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased'to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the defence deals cannot be performed without middlemen;

(b) how many persons are either authorised or empanelled by the Defence Ministry to do so; and